

every time, and though every intelligent man knows that in all medical treatment there is an element of risk the plaintiff often thinks it worth while trying to convince the court that because there has been a mishap there must necessarily have been negligence. To rebut any such presumption is difficult, and often impossible. But though one has full sympathy with a patient who has met with further injury when in fact he was expecting a cure, yet it should not be forgotten that a verdict of negligence against a medical man, or any professional man for that matter, carries consequences reaching far beyond that particular case. In his foreword to this book Lord Justice Denning thinks that this fact makes the courts more tender towards such a defendant. "They realise that a finding of negligence against a professional man is a serious matter for him. It is not so much the money, because he is often insured against it. It is the injury to his reputation which a finding of negligence involves." Twenty years ago Lord Justice Denning would have been unquestionably right, but there is ground for suspicion that the last few years have seen a change, and it is a change which no professional man can view with anything but alarm.

F. H. N.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF MEDICAL PRACTICE. By C. H. Best and N. B. Taylor. Sixth Edition. (Pp. 1357. £4. 11s. 6d.) London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1955.

In this edition the text has "undergone the most extensive revision since it was first published." Scarcely a page has escaped some emendation, deletion or addition. Although the bulk has been slightly reduced, there are 1,357 pages, printed in double columns, of which seventy are devoted to bibliography, and sixty-one to the index. All but four of the eighty chapters have been revised by one of the original authors, Professor N. B. Taylor. The book is therefore one of the diminishing number mainly from the pen of one man, and it has the consequential merits and defects. A degree of integration and clarity is achieved which could hardly be obtained from a team. On the other hand, it is now impossible for anyone to be intimately familiar with more than a fraction of the whole field of physiology, and to write of more than a fraction with the insight of first-hand experience. The few chapters contributed by Professor Best on his own particular field of carbohydrate and fat metabolism bear the stamp of special experience and make fascinating reading. Of the remainder, the bulk of the book, it is probably true to say that no single person could have done a better job than Professor Taylor, and few could have been persuaded to attempt such a task. Some may think that he displays unnecessary caution in referring to recent work. For example, of the twenty-four references to work on cardiac output, none are later than 1945, and of the 164 references to work on the control of the blood vessels, only fifteen are later than 1945 and only four are later than 1950. In these fields important recent work in America, Scandinavia, and this country is unmentioned. However, it is perhaps wise for textbooks to be a little conservative, and we owe the authors of this old favourite a great debt for their labours. The length will deter most students from using it as their primary textbook, but the new edition will confirm and strengthen its place as a second textbook which the wise student keeps for reference in the clinical and post-graduate years.

A. D. M. G.

HANDBOOK OF PEDIATRICS. By H. K. Silver, M.D., C. H. Kempe, M.D., Henry B. Bruyn, M.D. (Pp. 548; figs. 33. \$3.00.) Los Altos, California: Lange, 1955.

THIS handbook endeavours to give the practitioner and student a concise digest of the diagnosis and management of pediatric disorders. Within the limits of its condensed form it covers the subject very adequately, dealing not only with the clinical findings and treatment, but also with the basic physiology and pathology; a useful section with some household poisons and their antidotes, and there is also an index of drugs and doses. The end papers contain normal blood chemistry values.

The book should prove very useful to the practitioner working with infants and young children as a quick source of reference, although as the publishers themselves state, it could not replace a standard text-book.

W. A. B. C.